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THE *Nature of Offences.*

BEING A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

New-Chapel in *Hampſtead*

MIDDLESEX;

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By WILLIAM GEORGE BARNES M. A.
Preacher at the ſaid Chapel.

To which is prefix'd

An Occaſional Dedication to *Joſeph Rous* Eſq;
of *Hampſtead Middleſex.*

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Printed for JOSEPH SMITH, at *Inigo Jones's*
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An Occasional Dedication to Sophia Rose Ellis,
of Hampstead Middlesex.

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TO

JOSEPH ROUS Esq;

OF

Hampstead in *Middlesex.*

SIR,

IT is neither an Over-Fondness of appearing in Print, nor yet too eager a Desire of publishing this mean Discourse, which hath snatch'd it from that Obscurity, to which 'twas rightly doom'd, and to which it lays so just a Claim. This appears not with a Design of extolling uncommon Merit, or proclaiming extraordinary Qualifications: *This comes not with a* selfish Prospect of Gain; *it has* no By-ends *or* Sinister Views; *it begs not for* Favour, *but requires* Justice. *The Occasion of this*

Demand is the ungenerous Uſage I met with in that Place, where I had been delivering the following Diſcourſe; for which you were pleas'd twice to brand me with the odious Name of an Envious Villain. *I am hitherto ignorant of the Reaſons which induc'd you to throw ſo much Dirt on me, for a Sermon which I had twice preach'd, many Months before 'twas my Lot to know you or yours. Had my Behaviour been juſtly exceptionable; or had I given any Cauſe for ſo ſcandalous a Reflexion;* The Doors of Juſtice are always open, to detect and puniſh Perſons deſervedly ſtigmatiz'd with the infamous Name of a *Villain.*

The Cauſe aſſign'd for this Reproach, was the Subſtance *of this Diſcourſe; tho' I wiſh the Rancour proceeded not from that general Hint ſometime ſince privately ſent.* "That Policy, if not connect-
" ed with Honeſty, is, when diſcover'd, a
" Deſcent of many Steps to the Bottom."
And I am the more apt to believe this the true Reaſon, *by your ſending for a* Gentleman *many Miles, in order to moleſt*

leſt me in the Performance of my Duty in that Chapel, *which you have been often heard to ſay*, was deſign'd for the Honour of God, and the Good of the Poor: *And I heartily wiſh, that* your generous Deſign may never be defeated, but literally fulfilled. *Having then nothing but this* laudable End in View, *ſuffer not* any ſordid Gain to byaſs you, *nor* filthy Lucre to overſway you; *but with* a noble *and* honeſt Principle, *purſue, with* much Probity *and* great Honour, *ſo* important a Work. *To effect which, nothing can more conduce than* our Precepts and Examples, *by performing our* ſeveral Duties *in our* different Vocations, with a Conſcience void of Offence, both towards God and Man. *Nothing can ſo effectually contribute towards the* Eſtabliſhment *of* your valuable Reputation, *as* a continued Deteſtation of all Injuſtice, Fraud and Deceit; *nothing can redound ſo much to* your preſent Peace *and* future Happineſs, *as the conſtant* Practice *of thoſe* rigid Rules *of* Virtue, *which too many, in their Way to Exaltation, have not only neglected, but deſpis'd.*

The

The Exceptions you took for the Diliuery of this Diſcourſe, has been the ſole Occaſion of its Publication; and I do aſſure you, I deliver'd it in the very ſame Words I had twice before preach'd it, (excepting a Clauſe which related to the Seaſon of Lent) and I have printed it verbatim, *as I preached it (excepting two Heads which I promiſed to enlarge on, when an apt Opportunity offer'd.) And now, Sir, What is there ſo heinous, what ſo flagrant in it, as to merit ſuch raſh Expreſſions? If* Thou art the Man, *repent and be ſav'd, become humble and lowly, and be abaſed now, that you may be exalted hereafter. If* Thou art not the Man, *why ſhould any thing diſturb you, which concerns you not? It is too ſhrewd a Token of Guilt, when particular Perſons are ſcandaliz'd at general Reflections upon Vice.*

I have nothing further to add, than a Petition to the Publick for Pardon; and I hope they will the more readily excuſe me, ſince the Publiſhing of this was not deſir'd, but extorted.

You,

You, Sir, had received my plain Discourse sooner, had not unforeseen Business prevented me. You may perhaps think it is even now too soon. I hope my Forwardness to do Justice will not offend you, since (how great soever your Slip be at present, for terming me a Villain) yet it may hereafter appear, that I am not the Person you say I am: *It is the hearty Wish of all* good Men, *that you may be found* that Man *you would be thought to be.*

I am in Sincerity,

Your hearty Well-wisher,

and faithful Servant,

W. G. Barnes.

Hampstead,
Feb. 29. 1727.

Hampstead,
Feb. 29. 1792.

MATTHEW XVIII. 7.

Wo unto the World because of Offences: For it must needs be that Offences must come: but Wo to that man by whom the Offence cometh.

THAT we may gain a better Insight, and acquire a right Understanding of the Text, let us look back to the preceding Words, and we shall find at the Beginning of this Chapter our blessed Lord's Disciples putting this Question to their Master, Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven? That is, who should be preferr'd to the chief Place of Christ's Kingdom, that temporal Kingdom of his which they as well as the Jews imagin'd

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that the *Meſſias* was about to take Poſſeſſion of. In order to check thoſe Ambitious Surmiſes, and reſtrain their ſwelling Pride, that he might diſengage them from the Thoughts of being advanc'd to temporal Dignity, and obtaining external Preheminence, he calls a little Child, and ſets him before them, as a fit Emblem and Pattern of Humility and Meekneſs: As if our Saviour had told them, that Pride and Ambition ran ſo counter to theſe neceſſary Qualifications, that no one could be admitted to the ineſtimable Privileges of his glorious Kingdom, without being an Inheritor of ſuch Virtues as were eſſential thereto; *Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven* [a]. Lay aſide Pride, become humble and lowly, without Ambition and Envy, giving Place to all, preferring your ſelves to none. Your Minds thus modelled, your Paſſions thus allay'd; in Pride, ye will be Children; but in Humility, Men. And as a further Recom-

[a] Verſe 3.

menda-

mendation of Humility, our bleſſed Lord not only promiſes the Kingdom of Heaven to thoſe who ſhall humble themſelves as little Children, but at the 5th Verſe ſays, that, Whoſo ſhall receive one ſuch little Child in his Name, he will look upon the Kindneſs as a Reſpect done to himſelf; but, ſays he [b], *Whoſo ſhall offend or ſcandalize one of theſe little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a Milſtone were hang'd about his Neck, and that he were drown'd in the Depth of the Sea.* Which Words are an Alluſion to a Puniſhment frequently inflicted on notorious Offenders, not only by the *Greeks* and *Romans*, but ſometimes likewiſe by the Jews. For tho' ſome have imagin'd that this Puniſhment was known among the *Syrians*, not Jews, reckoning only four Sorts as us'd by the latter, ſuch were Fire, the Sword, Stoning and Strangling; yet a learned [c] Writer has ſhewn, that the Jews did caſt Ἀναθέματα, execrable or excommunicate Perſons into the dead Sea with a

[b] *Verſe* 6. [c] Dr. *Allix.*

Stone tied about their Necks. But however this be, we may from hence learn, that it is a Crime of the higheſt Nature to offend one of theſe little ones, and that this Offence will meet with a moſt ſevere Puniſhment; for as certain Death will enſue from ſuch a Fall, ſo will the Depth of the Sea, as well as the Weight annexed, contribute towards his Death and Deſtruction. The whole that our Saviour means amounts to thus much; that whoever ſhall cauſe to ſtumble or occaſion the Fall of any, even the meaneſt of his Diſciples, the Conſequence thereof would be moſt dangerous; he had better meet with Death in his moſt ghaſtly Aſpect, than occaſion the Fall of one of his little ones. To which he ſubjoins, in the Words of my Text, a general *Wo unto the World becauſe of Offences: For it muſt needs be that Offences come: But Wo to that Man by whom the Offence cometh.*

I ſhall, in the Proſecution of this Diſcourſe, endeavour,

I. To explain what is here meant by Offences or Scandals, for ſo the Word is in the Original, and ought to be tranſlated.

II. I ſhall attempt a Proof of the Propoſition, It muſt needs be that Offences come.

I. THEN I am to explain what is here meant by the Word Offences. The Greek Word is Σκάνδαλα Scandals, by which we are not to underſtand every Word, or Action of ours which may give Offence to weak Chriſtians, or diſpleaſe thoſe, whoſe Judgment ought not to be the Touchſtone, by which our Deeds are to be tried. For we may be performing our Duties, when an ignorant, proud or paſſionate Perſon may be offended at us; but to what a wretched State ſhould we be reduc'd, if all Words were blameable, all Actions culpable, which did not ſquare with the vain Thoughts of the proud, or become parallel to the ſelf-conceited Opinions of the ignorant? If ſound Reaſon be deem'd Folly; if a Chriſtian-like

Perſua-

Perſuaſion be accounted Impertinence; or if the moſt diligent and induſtrious be reputed wanting, 'tis not owing to their Miſconduct, but to the Prejudices of the Ignorant, who weigh all that is ſaid and done in the partial, and therefore falſe, Balance of their own Minds. Thus, for Inſtance, do we ſee our Brother tread amiſs, or take any unwarrantable Steps, 'tis certainly a main Branch of Chriſtian Duty friendly to reprove him. This Check then on Men, hurrying on they know not where, or why, ſhall, inſtead of gaining Credit or Eſteem, be the certain Cauſe of proud Looks, and diſdainful Words. But this, tho' properly call'd a Scandal or an Offence to a weak Brother, is an Offence not given, but taken; tho' this is not the Offence ſpoken of in the Text: For an Offence in the Scripture ſignifies a Stumbling-block, or when we give Occaſion to others to fall. The Sufferings of our Saviour were an Offence or Stumbling-block to the Jews, and were to them who expected a temporal Deliverer a very melancholy Occaſion of their Unbelief. But herein the Jews, and

not

not our Saviour was culpable; for they inflicted the Puniſhment, and then took Offence at his Sufferings; they firſt put him to death, and then made a Stumbling-block of his Crucifixion. But the Offence or Scandal mentioned in the Text, againſt which there is ſo ſolemn a Wo denounc'd, is, ſuch an Omiſſion or Commiſſion, which, being in it ſelf ſinful, may, when known to others, be of ſo heinous a Nature as to occaſion their Fall. And this is done chiefly by Precept or Example. St. *Peter* preſum'd to adviſe our Bleſſed Saviour, not to expoſe himſelf to thoſe manifold Dangers which it was the determin'd Will of God he ſhould paſs thro', that thereby we might avoid them. But ſo preſumptuous was his Counſel, ſo raſh his Advice, that our Lord not only rejected it as unſeaſonable and misbecoming a Diſciple of his, but told him that he was an Offence or Scandal to him [d]: That is, thou by thy carnal Advice wouldſt put me off from proſecuting that great Deſign, the Redempti-

[d] *Matth.* xvi. 23.

on,

on of Mankind, and by ſo doing doſt lay a Stumbling-block, a Rock of Offence, in my Way. But of far more dreadful Conſequence is it, when we not only give Occaſion to others, but by the Offence given and taken they do actually ſtumble and fall. In this Caſe we become anſwerable for, becauſe we were acceſſary to, nay, were the chief Cauſe of, other Mens Sins. Such like Offences are given and taken, when we practice not what we profeſs; when we make Religion a Stalking-Horſe; and put on the Garb of Piety, only as a Cloak to ſcreen or hide our Knavery. But Men are more eſpecially ſaid to be ſcandalized, when we make Shipwreck of our Chriſtian Faith, or barter a good Conſcience for Gain. Such as hinder Men from embracing Chriſtianity, or keep them from turning to the true Religion and Church, by ſoothing them in their falſe and erroneous Opinions, to ſuch of the World it is, that Chriſt denounceth a dreadful Woe, becauſe of its Offences or Scandals.

II. I am to prove, that it muſt needs be that Offences come. It might, I preſume, paſs for a ſufficient Proof of this Propoſition, was I only to make it appear, that the Event has anſwer'd the Prediction. For who is there preſent ſo much a Stranger to the World and its Practices, as not to know, how many, and of what Sorts, the Offences are, which are daily both given and taken? The falſe Doctrines, the baſe Principles, and vile Tenets, the looſe and debauched Practices of Chriſtian Profeſſors are ſo notorious, ſuch heinous Offences, that infinite almoſt is the Number of thoſe, who have not only tripp'd at, but fell over theſe Stumbling-Blocks. The daring Attempt to deprive Chriſt of his Kingdom, the rude Aſſaults upon his Divinity, the many Attacks made upon his Religion, the great Encouragements given in a Chriſtian Country to Immorality and Profaneneſs, to Atheiſts and Libertines, are ſuch Rocks of Offence, that a good Man ſhou'd take heed to his Goings, that his Footſteps ſlip not. Was it poſſible for me to

delineate all the prevalent Vices of the Age, all the Corruptions of this Nation, I know not whether it might not with much more Reaſon be ſtiled a continued Rock of Offence, a Stage of Scandal, than a Country where Chriſtianity is ſuppoſed to ſhine in meridian Luſtre. But however, I ſhall not content my ſelf with a Deſcription of the Completion of this Prediction, that it muſt needs be that Offences come, but ſhall proceed to demonſtrate the unavoidable Neceſſity of theſe Offences coming. In order to give this Matter its own Light, let it be conſider'd, that what St. *Matthew* ſays of the Neceſſity of it, St. *Luke* ſeems to expreſs by ſofter Terms; the former ſays, It muſt needs be Ἀναγκή ἐστιν, there is Neceſſity for it; the latter, Ἀνενδεκτόν ἐστιν, it is not otherwiſe to be expected, we cannot in Reaſon imagine or ſuppoſe, but that Offences will come. And thus indeed would the Words be better tranſlated and underſtood. For we cannot ſuppoſe, but that God, if he pleaſed, could interpoſe, and prevent ſuch Offences; we cannot think that there is an abſolute Neceſſity for ſuch Temptations

tions to fall, or that the Regulation or Order of the World could not ſubſiſt, unleſs ſuch Offences or Scandals did abound. For if we could ſuppoſe this, we muſt immediately arraign God's Juſtice, who has denounced a ſolemn Wo to ſuch Offences, and at the ſame time lays us under a Neceſſity of committing them.

God, the ſupream Author and Giver of all good things, has thought fit to indue Man with Faculties, proper to diſtinguiſh between Good and Evil. And among many other Bleſſings conferr'd upon us, Free-Will, and conſequently Free-Agency is not the leaſt valuable. He hath ſet before us Right and Wrong, hath promiſed large Rewards to the former, and annexed ſevere Puniſhments to the latter. Now Man, being a Free-Agent, makes Choice of this or that, according to the Liberty or Freedom of his Will; which "Will is a Power of Self-Motion in Men, "and exerts it ſelf freely in Conſequence of "the laſt Judgment of the Underſtanding, "and is in Reality nothing but a moral or "immoral Motive.

If therefore Man morally mov'd to this or that Act of Volition, which is the Beginning of all Action, ſhould be checked or reſtrained by divine Interpoſition, the Liberty of Volition, or the Freedom of his Will, would be at once deſtroy'd; becauſe God determines him to this or that particular Act.

Now where there is a Determination without Volition, there can be no Liberty or Freedom of Will, much leſs Free-Action. 'Tis true indeed, that we can will nothing without God's ſpecial Providence, and he who has made us free, can, if he pleaſes, make us neceſſary Agents. But then may we not rationally conclude, that we ſhould or ought never to be accountable for ſuch Actions which depend not on Choice, but Impulſe? Which Scheme would at once overthrow the Ideas we have form'd of God's Goodneſs and Juſtice.

Matters being thus ſtated, and our Way cleared for a better Paſſage to the

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Propoſition; it may not be improper to reply, That ſince Truth Himſelf hath told us, that it muſt needs be, that Offences come, and at the ſame time utters a Wo to the World becauſe of Offences, whether theſe Offences do depend on His Providence? for it may ſeem ſomething unnatural to ſuppoſe, that ſo good a Being ſhould permit, or at leaſt connive at theſe Offences, whilſt given, and at the ſame time threaten Wo to the World, becauſe of them. I anſwer briefly, that Providence is moſt certainly concern'd; for they are, in reſpect of divine Providence, Mediums tending to a good End, which I ſhall endeavour to evince, both from Reaſon and Scripture. But,

1*ſt*, From Reaſon, The Supreme Cauſe cannot be diſappointed of his End, becauſe this Argument ſavours too much of Ignorance or Impotency. Now ſince Offences are Mediums propos'd by God to ſerve a good End, it neceſſarily follows, that they depend on his Providence. However, in the

2*d*. PLACE, Scripture does plainly teach the ſame, *The Lord hath made all Things for himſelf; yea, even the Wicked for the Day of Evil* [e]. The Senſe is moſt plain, that all Things are and exiſt by God's Providence, even Wickedneſs it ſelf; in the Puniſhment of which, God plainly ſhews, that he is not always blind to Mens Sins [f]. Again.

OFFENCES muſt needs come, becauſe they ſerve to the Glory of God, and the Furtherance of the Salvation of the Faithful. They tend then,

1*ſt*, To the Glory of God, becauſe they are Arguments of his Power. *In very Deed for this Cauſe*, ſays God to *Pharaoh, have I rais'd thee up, for to ſhew in thee my Power* [g].

2*dly*, THEY are Arguments of God's Juſtice; for ſo long as Hypocriſy lies hid, the Juſtice of God, in puniſhing Hypocrites, appears not ſo illuſtrious; but

[e] *Proverbs* xvi. 4. [f] *Iſaiah* x. 5, 6, 7. [g] *Exodus* ix. 16.

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when once Hypocriſy diſcovers it ſelf, it always gives ſo much Offence, as to merit God's Wrath, thereby manifeſting his Juſtice.

3dly, It muſt needs be that Offences come, that God's Mercy may ſhine forth; and for this Reaſon ſome imagine, that he ſuffered *Hezekiah* and David to fall, that his Mercy might raiſe them up. His Providence hath ſo order'd all Things, as oft-times to make very great Sins, the greateſt Motives to Repentance and Humiliation.

4thly, They diſcover the Wiſdom of God, *He taketh the Wiſe in their own Craftineſs* [h]. In ſhort there never was a greater Offence or Scandal, than the Betraying and Crucifixion of the Lord of Glory; but yet even in that did God's Juſtice, Wiſdom, Power and Mercy moſt evidently appear. If there were no Offences, God's Providence would not, ſo much as it now does, appear moſt conſpi-

[h] *Job* v. 13.

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cuous and ſplendid. But as Offences or Scandals tend to the Glory of God, ſo are they likewiſe inſtrumental towards the Salvation of the Faithful; for as much as by them, their Love and Fidelity towards God is experienc'd; by divers Offences, ſuch as by novel or unſound Doctrines, by Perſecutions and Croſſes, by divers Temptations, their Sanctity breaks forth as a Lamp of Light before Men and Angels. By Offences, their Love and Charity towards their Offenders is exemplified; for, as St. *Peter* Argues, [i] *What Glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your Faults, ye ſhall take it patiently? But if when ye do well, and ſuffer for it, ye take it patiently; this is acceptable with God.* They conduce likewiſe to their Glory, for as much as by ſuffering or bearing patiently the Injuries offer'd to them, they in ſome Meaſure reſemble the Son of God. From all which we may conclude, that it muſt needs be that Offences come, and that it is by God's Providence that they do come. But if

[i] 1 *Pet.* ii. 20.

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any ſhould be ſo raſh or deſirous of ſearching into the Reaſons of God's Providence, for permitting theſe Offences, I ſhall anſwer, that the Scriptures have ſet Bounds to our Curioſity; and St. *Paul* teaches us, that the Judgments of God are unſearchable, and his Ways paſt finding out. [k] In ſhort, we are by Nature prone to Evil, and averſe to that which is good; and it would ill ſuit with the Wiſdom of God's Providence, who hath made Men free Agents, to reſtrain the Luſts of their Hearts, or curb their inordinate Affections; for as much as theſe Offences are immediate Conſequences of the general Depravation of human Nature. The World is full of Temptations; Temptations to Sin are on all Hands; ſome are by their Precepts enticing and perſuading Men to that which is evil; others are alluring them by Promiſes of Riches and Greatneſs; another Sort by Threatnings and Puniſhments, and ſo on; and indeed ſo univerſally prevalent is Error, Infidelity and Wickedneſs, the

[k] *Rom.* xi. 3.

Offences mention'd in the Text, that it is owing to God's ſpecial Protection, that we do not daily fall into them; ſo numerous are Scandals and Temptations, that it affords Matter of the greateſt Admiration and Thankſgiving, that any of us are enabled to ſtrive againſt the Stream of ſuch publick Examples. Where at length will our Wickedneſs lead us? By our manifold Offences we are laying a certain Foundation of future and eternal Miſery. How induſtrious are we to ſow the Seeds, which in the Harveſt will produce a ſad Plenty of Anguiſh and Sorrow? What Pains are we taking to furniſh our enraged Conſciences with furious and bitter Stings! Like ſo many poor diſtracted Wretches, cutting and gaſhing our ſelves; which Wounds, tho' for the preſent we feel not, yet in our Intervals of Death and Judgment, we ſhall too ſadly, as well as too late, find, have touch'd us to the Quick. When we ſhall be ſtartled and alarm'd at the Sound of the laſt dreadful Trump; when our firſt Death is over, and our ſecond and eternal

nal in View; when we ſhall appear at the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt, to reap the miſerable Fruits of our Scandals and Offences, with what Horrour and Amazement ſhall we look forward on the State of Deſpair and Darkneſs, in which there will be no Hopes, nothing but dire Remorſe, for procuring to our ſelves the Cup of God's Wrath mix'd with unquenchable Fire.

I have already conſider'd the Nature of an Offence or Scandal under my firſt general Head, which is in ſhort, an Omiſſion or Commiſſion of ours, a ſtumbling Block, or Occaſion of falling to others; which Offence may be given by our Pride, Self-Conceit, by Infidelity, Apoſtacy, by bad Precepts or ill Examples. For tho' our Saviour in the Text ſeems to make Pride the Centre or Butt to which his Diſcourſe was directed, which by the by is a damnable Sin, the ſevere Effects of which the fallen Angels do ſadly bewail; yet is not Offence or Scandal to be confin'd to Pride only,

but is equally applicable, or in like Manner to be extended to Sin in general. And in the ſecond Place, I attempted to prove the Propoſition of the Text, that it muſt needs be that Offences come, from the many Ends they ſerve, as well to illuſtrate God's Glory, by ſetting forth his Juſtice, Power, Wiſdom and Mercy, as furthering the Salvation of the Faithful; for as much as by theſe Offences they have apt Opportunities of exerciſing their Patience, and ſhewing their Love to God, by confiding in him, when beſet with many Dangers, attack'd with falſe Doctrines, loaded with Afflictions, and perſecuted even unto Death.

I ſhall ſhut up this Diſcourſe with a brief Application in the ſame Senſe which our Saviour deliver'd the Text; becauſe proper to humble our Souls and Bodies, and to make us ſpiritually minded.

Now, whoſoever's Heart is fraught with Pride, cannot take a more proper Time for humbling it than the preſent; *For*

now

now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation. But ſetting aſide God's Judgments on the proud Sinner, not to inſiſt at preſent on the Wo denounced to the ſelf-conceited Boaſter, *Solomon* tells us, [l] That *Pride goeth before Deſtruction, and an haughty Spirit before a Fall*; that is, Inſolent Behaviour is the Fore-runner of Deſtruction: And when Men lift up themſelves in their own Thoughts, and overlook others with Diſdain and Contempt, they are in the greateſt Danger to ſtumble; it looks as if their Downfal was approaching. Is the rich Man proud of his Wealth, it ſeems as if Wings were preparing for the Riches to fly away? Is the ambitious Man proud of Honours he never deſerv'd, or fairly obtain'd? His Pride is a Token of his Fall, and a Fore-runner of his ſhameful Exit. Again, *Solomon* tells us, [m] *That only by Pride cometh Contention*; that is, They that have an high Conceit of themſelves, and will yield to none, declare their Folly, in that

[l] Prov. 16. 18. [m] Prov. 13. 10.

they

they can do nothing without Strife and Contention; but they that are ſo humble as to be advis'd by others, do all things prudently in Quietneſs and Peace. There are a Multitude of Sins which flow from the foul Spring of Pride, ſuch as Wrath, Malice, Envy, Hatred, and Contempt: But beſide the Sin, 'tis one of the greateſt Follies; we having nothing of our own to be proud of: And what can be a greater Folly than to be proud of nothing? If he eſteems Wealth a ſufficient Foundation for the Superſtructure of his Pride, alas! his Wealth may perhaps be unjuſtly acquired; or elſe, in ſuch a Manner, as no Man, but the proud one, wou'd on the ſame Conditions have accepted of it.

If Honour is thought a proper Baſis, 'tis eaſily imagin'd, that by Wealth he may have acquir'd this Honour, only to ſerve ſome ignoble End, the feeding his Vanity, or the pampering his Pride: And how cutting muſt it be to one, eat up with this incurable Diſtemper, who, when he

is

is admoniſh'd, tho' ever ſo mildly, ever ſo friendly, and all to no Purpoſe, is at length convinc'd from Reaſons he can't avoid liſtening to, tho' much againſt his Will, that there is nothing more deſpicable in the Eyes of all Men, of common Senſe, than a proud Fool? King *Nebuchadnezzar* was for his Pride driven from the Society of Mankind to dwell amongſt Beaſts. The fallen Angels, for their Pride, were doom'd to outer Darkneſs. And why, O vain Man, muſt thou expect to eſcape the Cenſures of Men, and the ſevere Wrath of God? Lay then aſide Pride, and cloath your ſelves with Humility; for Meekneſs is moſt ſuitable to human Garb. Why, knowing theſe things, will you lay ſuch Stumbling-Blocks of Offence in the Way? So fearful ought ye to be of theſe and all other Sins, as rather to part with thy Hand or thy Foot: *Nay, better is it for thee to enter into Life, halt or maim'd, rather than, having two Hands or two Feet, to be caſt into everlaſting Fire: It is better*

for

for thee to enter into Life with one Eye, rather than, having two Eyes, to be cast into Hell-Fire. Which Fire, that we may all escape, God of his infinite Mercy grant. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

Just Publish'd,

CHarity and Charity Schools defended. A Sermon preach'd at *St. Martins* Palace in *Norwich*, by the Appointment of the Right Reverend Father in God, *Thomas* late Lord Bishop of that Diocese. By *William George Barnes* M. A. Preacher at the New Chapel in *Hampstead.*